



MAGIC VALLEY

BLAINE, CAMAS, CASSIA, GOODING, JEROME, LINCOLN, MINIDOKA, & TWIN FALLS COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The seasonally unadjusted unemployment rate in October 2001 for the Magic Valley Labor Market Area was 4.1 percent—that's three-tenths of a percentage point higher than September 2001, but three-tenths of a percentage point lower than October 2000. *Civilian Labor Force* was 1.1 percent higher than a year ago, indicating that new people are entering the workforce. Overall numbers of unemployed are down 5.8 percent year-over-year. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 4.1 percent indicated strong employment in South Central Idaho.

Nonfarm Wage & Salary Employment was down by 3.4 percent, and this seems to support the contention that the economy is cooling somewhat. Virtually all sectors show some declines brought about by an economic slowdown. The sectors with the largest decreases were *Transportation, Communications, & Utilities*, and *Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate* with declines of 16.1 percent and 8.3 percent respectively.

Consumer confidence nationwide has improved somewhat and has helped *Retail* and *Services* stabilize, minimizing their sharp downward trend over the past three months. In South Central Idaho consumer confidence has continued to be strong and most retailers have been hiring seasonal holiday help as usual. Most major retailers have reported hiring temporary holiday help at average or higher levels, and initial consumer spending has been encouraging. Magic Valley travel agents reported full flights and trips over the Thanksgiving weekend making South Central Idaho somewhat atypical to the nation.

Food Processing was down 12.7 percent over the past month, but that was expected because lower agricultural production reduced inventories for process-

Magic Valley Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Twin Falls, Jerome, and Gooding counties

	Oct 2001*	Sept 2001	Oct 2000	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	47,640	47,360	47,120	0.6	1.1
Unemployment	1,940	1,810	2,060	7.2	-5.8
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	3.8	4.4		
Total Employment	45,700	45,550	45,060	0.3	1.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	48,320	48,420	47,750	-0.2	1.2
Unemployment	1,610	1,480	1,670	8.8	-3.6
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	3.1	3.5		
Total Employment	46,710	46,940	46,080	-0.5	1.4
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs**					
Goods-Producing Industries	7,230	7,790	7,480	-7.2	-3.3
Mining & Construction	2,070	2,140	2,080	-3.3	-0.5
Manufacturing	5,160	5,650	5,400	-8.7	-4.4
Durable Goods	840	840	880	0.0	-4.5
Nondurable Goods	4,320	4,810	4,520	-10.2	-4.4
Food Processing	3,290	3,770	3,450	-12.7	-4.6
All Other Nondurable Goods	1,030	1,040	1,070	-1.0	-3.7
Service-Producing Industries	29,840	29,730	30,890	0.4	-3.4
Transportation, Comm., & Utilities	2,510	2,470	2,990	1.6	-16.1
Wholesale Trade	2,250	2,340	2,280	-3.8	-1.3
Retail Trade	8,090	8,060	8,420	0.4	-3.9
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1,220	1,210	1,330	0.8	-8.3
Services	7,960	8,050	8,380	-1.1	-5.0
Government Administration	3,560	3,620	3,700	-1.7	-3.8
Government Education	4,250	3,980	3,790	6.8	12.1

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

ing. In addition, some food processors, especially fresh-pack operations, did not have as long a production season. The staple food processors in South Central Idaho appear to be very stable and have shown no indication of unannounced worker layoffs. Agriculture has shown some positive movement this past year. Locally, prices have seen an increase—potatoes are up 111.3 percent, butter is up 67 percent, wheat is up 48.7 percent, beans are up 12.6 percent, and sugar is up 10.9 percent. Most of these increases were brought about because fewer acres were planted, creating reduced supplies which drove prices up. Again, the outlook for agriculture remains more optimistic than in the near past provided that South Central Idaho receives the precipitation necessary to replenish the reservoirs and provide adequate irrigation throughout the next crop year.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Twin Falls County

- Dell Computers has completed its initial hiring for the new consumer technical support center to be located on Pole Line Road in Twin Falls. To date, more than 2,000 applicants have called in to the Initial Voice Response Number. Magic Valley Job Service employees conducted one-on-one telephone screenings with several hundred applicants, narrowing the applicant pool to approximately 400 who were invited to Dell Overview sessions on the weekend of November 9 at the College of Southern Idaho. Those applicants who passed through that phase were given one-on-one interviews with Dell personnel and many were offered jobs. Dell has enough employees to begin its initial classes slated to start in January 2002, and the center is scheduled to open for business in early February. Dell will continue to expand its workforce as demand and qualified applicants increase. Dell representatives expressed their appreciation to Pam Petersen, Carlos Hernandez, Diane Sanchez, and the rest of Magic Valley Job Service for the tremendous effort they put forth to make the initial hiring a success.
- Zions First National Bank is expanding in Twin Falls with a new bank to be located on Blue Lakes Boulevard North across from Chili's Restaurant. This will be their first full-size, full-service branch in Twin Falls. Previously the only Zions Bank branch in Twin Falls was an in-store branch inside Smiths Food King and Drug Center on Addison Avenue East. Zions expects to create five to seven new jobs with the opening of this branch.
- A major landmark store in downtown Twin Falls will be changing names and changing styles. Cain's Home Furnishings will change its name in January when it completes the conversion from an upscale furniture store to a department store. The new store will be named J.Sani. The owner, the English Group, will retire the Cain's Home Furnishings store name with no plans to use it again, but will maintain the legal rights to it. By January, the original building Cain's occupied will house J. Sani's eight stores-within-a-store, each dealing with a different aspect of the home environment. The overhaul of the new store will add 10-15 full- and part-time jobs.

Jerome, Gooding, Camas, Lincoln, Blaine Counties

- Canyon Rim Collision Repair is a new and expanded service in Jerome that provides all types of collision repair and custom auto body needs. The business is located in the former Canyonside Auto Body Shop at 361 Golf Course Road. The new business, owned by Mike and Nikki Nielson, is a full ser-

vice body shop offering services ranging from providing motor homes with wild graphics to restoring antique and muscle cars. The Neilsons provide full service collision repair, glass work, frame straightening, custom color matching, and insurance claim work. They offer free pickup, delivery, and computerized estimates.

- The Sun Valley-Ketchum Chamber of Commerce has created a new marketing plan designed to offset the softened economy by encouraging visitors, primarily from western markets, to travel to Sun Valley this winter. The combination of the September 11 terrorist attacks and the drought situation has had a negative impact on the area. Sun Valley Ski Resort delayed the traditional Thanksgiving opening due to lack of snow and warm weather which prevented snow making. It is estimated that winter booking for ski packages are down 20-30 percent thus far. To counteract these problems, Sun Valley is initiating a program called "Sun Valley: An American Tradition—Come Play and We'll Pay." This program will feature Sun Valley travel tokens, which are gift certificates that can be redeemed at more than 80 local businesses. Visitors booking stays of at least two nights at participating local lodging properties through Sun Valley Central Reservations will receive a \$25 travel token per person to use during their visit to the community. To fund the promotion, the chamber is redirecting \$63,500 in winter marketing funds from other programs—\$45,000 will be used for travel tokens and the remaining \$18,500 will be used to advertise the promotion.

Cassia And Minidoka Counties

- The Mini-Cassia Chamber of Commerce's board elected Carl Hanson, administrator of Minidoka Memorial Hospital, as president for 2002. First Vice-President will be Robert Harris, owner of Century Cinema 5, and Second Vice-President will be Robert Haun, owner of Haun's Hardware. The chamber is planning to continue its business education efforts such as its recent sponsorship of a fraud forum. It also will continue to work on the creation of a health insurance product for small employers in the area.

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